



East County Citizens Advisory Board (ECCAB)
Eastern Montgomery Regional Center
3300 Briggs Chaney Road, Silver Spring, MD 20904

Wednesday, October 7, 2015
MEETING SUMMARY

Members Present: Marya Ford, Fatmata Barrie, Peter Myo Khin, Curtis Watkins, Frederick Stichnoth, Sharon Brown, Faustina Smith-Neil, Peter Myo Khin, Fisseha Adugna, Jerold Samet, Teddy Wu, Melissa Daley, Samantha Blizzard, Erik Amick, Anthony Ramirez, Len Newman, Jeremiah Pope.

Guests Present: Clarence Snuggs, Ed Weiler, Matt Carrigan, Lenda Dincer, Ray Parrach, Lee Yaffe-Stark, Gertrude Joni, Mensah Adjogah, Mark Pharaoh, Mara Parker, Brian Anleu.

Staff Present: Jewru Bandeh and Chiffon Smith.

Citizens' Forum: Issues/comments received from citizens included- Small townhomes have 9-10 people in them. Broadmore Road. – cars are parked on both sides of the road and blocked by the Fire Marshalls. Fire Marshalls knocked on doors to address the issue. Expired car tags on both sides of the road – need to remove cars out of the way. 311 called but nothing happened.

Special Guest Presentation: Clarence Snuggs, Director, Montgomery County Department of Housing and Community Affairs (DHCA): Update on Housing and Community Development Related Activities in Montgomery County. His presentation highlights included the following:

- The high cost of living in Montgomery County: \$40K - \$60K median income coming into county but metro area cost of living is very expensive.
- To live within their means, a person must spend no more than 30% of their income on housing.
- DHCA supports community programs which benefits residents and improve quality of life.
- Overview of DHCA Mission- to increase supply/production of quality affordable housing opportunities, preservation of new housing, and enforce housing codes to ensure that existing housing is maintained.
- Approximately 700 housing related service requests are received and processed per year. A large number are landlord tenant related.
- The county's guiding principles include being responsive & accountable, to have affordable & inclusive housing, an effective and efficient transportation network, to have healthy and sustainable communities, safe streets, & secure neighborhood, strong & vibrant economy and vital living for all residents.
- Rental facilities – 63% of housing (over 50 years old) – lot of deferred maintenance.

- Vacancy rate – 5.5% with turnover rate of 23.4% & turnover rent (\$1,500 -\$1,999) – 5,917.
- DHCA inspects 1/3 of all properties annually – use 10% sample inspection & go up to 100%.
- Working on strengthening tenant organizations & voice.
- DHCA currently has a total of 25 inspectors.
- Issues & concerns are rental rates, walkable communities – live/work/play, senior & millennial housing opportunities, inclusionary zoning & housing quality.
- Spoke of the new senior housing in downtown Silver Spring by the new library – 139 of 149 units are affordable.
- DHCA enforces chapter 26 – housing maintenance rules, by inspecting housing units to ensure safe and sanitary conditions.
- DHCA provide management oversight to ensure compliance with all regulatory requirements for federal funding awarded to county by HUD - focus on repeat offenders.
- The department promotes cultural sensitivity – need to address cultural differences and be more tolerant and want to have that conversation.
- Emphasized that there is no single definition of single family.
- Addresses issues during transitions within communities by using facilitators, i.e., Layhill & Georgia Avenue homes have different types of families with 40% of housing categorized as common ownership (condos) & they are not refinanced because FHA will not insure.
- Affordable housing produced – 1180; affordable housing preserved – 2544.
- Code compliance – 93% resolution; repeat offenders – 73; landlord/tenant mediation – 97% resolved; multi-family dwelling – 38.2%; single family conciliation – 36.7%.
- Home ownership – 67%; rental – 33%; burdened owners – 20.9%; burdened renters – 48.6%; median gross rent - \$1562; homelessness – 99 persons; foreclosure events – 853 (7.1% of state) – 5th overall (Prince Georges - #1, Baltimore - #2, Baltimore City - #3 & Ann Arundel - #4).

Approval of Meeting Summary – The ECCAB June 3, 2015 & September 2, 2015 meeting summaries were approved.

East County Regional Services Center Director's Report: Jewru Bandeh provided a brief report highlighting:

- Good turnout at Burtonsville Day Parade and Festival and thanked the members who showed up.
- The Burtonsville Crossing Shopping Center – Eden nearly concluded on the issue of the Giant lease.
- Montgomery College continues to expand – now have senior computer certification training;
- East County service provider network established – 18 agencies serving East County are participating.
- Rapid Transit System (RTS) Corridor Advisory Committee (CAC) continues to meet.
- The County plans for an affordable housing project on the parking lot outside the regional center.

Chair's Report: Anthony Ramirez remarks included:

- He thanked members who volunteered at Burtonsville Day Celebration.
- He introduced the 4 new members (Sharon Brown, Frederick Stichnoth, Faustina Smith-Neil and Curtis Watkins).
- He thanked the economic planning committee for changing the date of their meeting last month.
- He briefly talked about the attendance policy for ECCAB members and caused for removal.

Council Staff Updates: Updates highlighted:

- Burtonsville crossing shopping center discussion is moving forward.
- Praisner early voting site closing.
- November 2nd – County Council Education Committee meeting to review Resources and Staffing for At Risk Areas Report.
- There will be a briefing on ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) – police was to turn over people to ICE even if only driving without a license; the county participated mostly as it pertains to rape, murder, people convicted, etc.
- Councilmember Elrich is concerned about voter rights and access because no public transportation at new sites expect during rush hour.
- County Council discussed the issue of pesticides on lawns – rule in effect for county (July, 2016); personal property (January, 2018), with a broad exception of 58 weeds.
- Public hearing on October 22nd – Fraud, ID theft for senior citizens – headed by the office of homeland security; passed prohibition of purchasing prostitution.

Committee Reports

- **Planning and Economic Development Committee:** The Chair was not present. Members briefly indicated that at their meeting they covered issues including regional economic development issues, general economic development needs for East County, discussion on the need for a chamber of commerce in this area, traffic issues, the White Oak Science Gateway Master Plan, and transit authority task force and the ECCAB letter to the County Executive sent on 10/6/15.
- **Quality of Life/Services Committee** – the interim Chair reported on 2 high level issues – fireworks proposal and panhandling – she will send out e-mail requesting sign-ups for taskforces on how to handle panhandlers and bringing fireworks to East County; there was one challenge from the Association of Firefighters Re: fundraising by panhandling works well for them.

Old Business: None

New Business: None

Announcements: October 17, Saturday 12-3pm – Firehouse Open House, Montgomery County Gonder Sister City Fundraiser to be held Sunday, October 11th at the Silver Spring Civic Building.

Adjournment: The meeting adjourned at 9:13 p.m.